

## Jumping Worms In the News

May 4, 2021

Jumping Worms have recently been in the news and the MNCC has been fielding questions about this invasive species. So, we thought it would be helpful to our members if we pulled some facts together.

First, the most common sources for jumping worms will be:

- Worms bought on-line for vermi-composting, if they are released into the environment,
- Worms bought on-line for use in backyard compost bins, or
- Wood mulches.

Vermicompost requires a specific worm, red wigglers. Unfortunately, some of the worms sold as red wigglers contain other types of worms, including jumping worms. If contained in a bin within a household there is no risk. The risk comes when people release those worms into the environment. This can happen when the vermi-compost is used in potting mixes or soil mixes used in outdoor plantings.

Another way jumping worms get into the outdoor environment is when red wigglers are purchased for use in an outdoor compost bin. Again, this allows the worms to escape into the surrounding environment.

Wood mulches can pose a problem as well sometimes. Dragging wood material through soil with possible jumping worm eggs may embedded the jumping worms in the bark. When ground for mulch could result in spread the eggs in your yard. This is possible but a highly unlikely scenario here in MN right now and would have to be from wood gathered the previous late summer or fall. A larger concern would be mulches brought in from other highly infested states, as MN is in the early stages of this invasive pest.

Since jumping worms are killed in temperatures greater than 100 degrees, the least likely sources of jumping worms are large scale commercial YW and SSOM compost facilities. The reason is those facilities monitor their process and achieve temperatures of greater than 131 degrees F. In the case of SSOM facilities, they are required to reach those temperature for 7-21 days depending on the compost process they are using.

However, compost from small municipal YW sites may not be managed or monitored at all and, if jumping worms are in your community, may be present in that compost. If you are getting compost from a YW compost facility you need to ask if they monitor their process and if temperatures over 100 degrees F have been reached for at least 24 hours.

### Web Resources

MN DNR: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/news/2020/08/31/beware-jumping-worms-soil-gardening-mulch>

U of MN: <https://extension.umn.edu/identify-invasive-species/jumping-worms>

U of WI Madison: <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/jumping-worms/>